

Common Formative Assessments

Presented by:

**The Leadership and Learning Center
www.LeadandLearn.com**

(866) 399-6019



Larry Ainsworth, M.S.

Larry Ainsworth is the Executive Director of Professional Development at The Leadership and Learning Center (formerly the Center for Performance Assessment) in Englewood, Colorado. He travels widely throughout the United States and Canada to assist school systems in implementing best practices related to standards, assessment, and accountability across all grades and content areas. He is the author or co-author of nine published books: *“Unwrapping” the Standards*, *Power Standards*, *Common Formative Assessments*, *Student Generated Rubrics*, and *Five Easy Steps to a Balanced Math Program*, including three 2006 editions, one each for the Primary, Upper Elementary, and Secondary grade spans. His chapter, “Common Formative Assessments: The Centerpiece of an Integrated Standards-Based Assessment System,” appears in the 2007 assessment anthology, *Ahead of the Curve: The Power of Assessment to Transform Teaching and Learning*, edited by Douglas B. Reeves. Larry’s primary motivation is to assist educators and leaders in helping all students succeed by “taking the mystery” out of the instruction, learning, and assessment process.

Larry has delivered keynote addresses across North America, most notably for the U.S. Department of Education, New York Department of Education, Connecticut Department of Education, North Carolina Department of Education, Ohio Department of Education, Michigan Department of Education, Harvard University Graduate School of Education’s Principals’ Center, Solution Tree of Canada, Solution Tree, 21st Century Learning, California Staff Development Council, Louisiana Staff Development Council, Indiana Staff Development Council, Indiana Computer Educators’ Conference, California Private Schools, Archdiocese of Los Angeles, Diocese of Fort Worth, and the Southern Regional Education Board. He has conducted keynotes and breakout sessions at national and regional conferences throughout the country, most notably for the Ohio’s Battelle for Kids conference, Virginia Title I and STARS conferences, the California Math Council, the California International Studies Project, the Alabama CLAS Summer Institute, the Delaware Professional Development Conference, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the National Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, and the National School Conference Institute.

With 24 years experience as an upper elementary and middle school classroom teacher in demographically diverse schools, Larry brings a varied background and wide range of professional experiences to each of his presentations. He has held numerous leadership roles within school districts, including mentor teacher and K-12 math committee co-chair, and has served as a mathematics assessment consultant in several San Diego County school districts.

Larry holds a Master of Science degree in educational administration.

The Leadership and Learning Center
317 Inverness Way South, Suite 150
Englewood, Colorado 80112
Toll Free: 1.866.388.6019
International: +1.303.504.9312
Fax: 303.504.9417
LeadandLearn.com

Common Formative Assessments: The Power of Assessments *For* Learning

Presented by
Larry Ainsworth
The Leadership and Learning Center
Englewood, Colorado
LeadandLearn.com
866.399.6019

Compelling Question

- What *are* effective schools doing to achieve dramatic results in student learning?

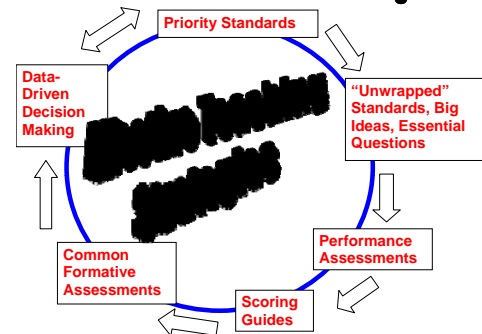


Common Findings in Successful Schools

- Formed a professional learning community
- Focused on student work (through assessment)
- Changed their *instructional practice* accordingly to get better results
- Did all of this on a continuing basis

M. Fullan, "The Three Stories of Education Reform,"
Phi Delta Kappan, April 2000.

How Powerful Practices Work Together

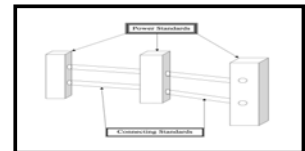


Priority Standards

Where The Work With Standards and
Assessments All Begins

Priority Standards and Supporting Standards

- Like fence posts, Priority Standards provide curricular focus in which teachers need to "dig deeper" and assure student competency.
- Like fence rails, "Supporting Standards" are curricular standards which *connect to and support* Priority Standards.

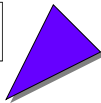


Are the Rectangle and Rhombus Equally Important?

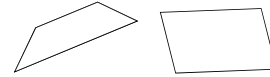
Which is more essential for students to really understand and be able to do—in school, in everyday life, and on state tests?

- To thoroughly understand how to find area and perimeter of a rectangle or triangle in an applied, real-life context

OR...



Are the Rectangle and Rhombus Equally Important?



- To memorize the formula for finding the area and perimeter of a trapezoid, parallelogram, or rhombus

The rectangle is a fence post;
the rhombus is a rail.



Priority Standards Selection Criteria

- Look at *all* the grade-specific or course-specific standards through the common “lens” of:

| *Endurance, leverage, and readiness for next level of learning*

OR

| What students need for success—in school, in life, and on state tests.

Priority Standards Steps

- Step 1: Make initial selections based on professional judgment.
- Step 2: Analyze state test requirements and school and district test data.
- Step 3: Modify selections as needed.
- Step 4: Vertically align standards PK-12.
- Step 5: Acquire feedback from all sites.
- Step 6: Revise, publish, distribute

L. Ainsworth, *Power Standards: Identifying the Standards That Matter The Most*, Advanced Learning Press (2003)

From Priority Standards to Common Formative Assessments

- With the Priority Standards foundation in place, design matching pre- and post-common formative assessments to evaluate student understanding of those standards.
- Format items to match district benchmark assessments, end-of-course assessments, and state tests.
- Include correct *standards* terminology, not simplified terms.

Common Formative Assessments

With Their Connections to Data Teams
and Effective Teaching Strategies

The Power Of COMMON Assessments

“Schools with the greatest improvements in student achievement consistently used common assessments.”

Douglas Reeves, *Accountability In Action* (2004)

What Are Common Assessments?

- “Not standardized tests, but rather teacher-created, teacher-owned assessments that are collaboratively scored and that provide immediate feedback to students and teachers.”

Douglas Reeves, Founder
The Leadership and Learning Center

What Are Common *Formative* Assessments?

- Assessments *for* learning administered to all students in grade level or course several times during semester, trimester, or year
- Items collaboratively designed by participating teachers
- Items represent essential (Priority) standards *only*

L. Ainsworth and D. Viegut, *Common Formative Assessments: How to Connect Standards-based Instruction and Assessment*, Corwin Press (2006)

What Are Common *Formative* Assessments?

- Items designed to match the *level of rigor* indicated in the targeted Priority Standards
- A *blend* of item types, including selected-response (multiple choice, true/false, matching) *and* constructed-response (short- or extended)
- Student results analyzed in grade-level or course-specific Data Teams to guide instructional planning and delivery

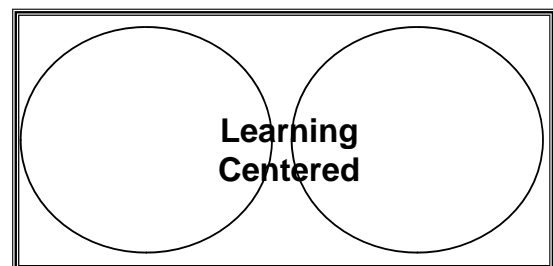
L. Ainsworth and D. Viegut, *Common Formative Assessments: How to Connect Standards-based Instruction and Assessment*, Corwin Press (2006)

Data Teams TM : The Mechanism For Measuring Progress

1. Collect and chart data and results.
2. Analyze strengths and obstacles.
3. Set S.M.A.R.T. goal for student improvement.
4. Select effective teaching strategies.
5. Determine results indicators.

Data Team Process,
The Leadership and Learning Center, Englewood, CO

Two Interdependent Practices



Common Formative Assessments ↔ Data Teams

The Big Picture!

How Do All These Powerful Practices
Connect?

If the State Standards
and the State Tests
Were “Bookends” and
These Powerful Practices
Were The “Books” In
Between...



How Would You Arrange The “Books”
to Show the Connections?

Connecting the Pieces

The Washington Standards-
Assessment Alignment
Diagram

Source: L. Ainsworth & D. Viegut, *Common Formative
Assessments: How to Connect Standards-Based
Instruction and Assessment* (2006)

Intentional Alignment Of Assessments

- Alignment of *all* assessment measures—
classroom, common, district, and state—
provides predictive value of how students
are likely to do on next level of assessment
in time for teachers to make instructional
adjustments!
- In this way, assessment is truly *informing
instruction*!

Talk It Over !

- What benefits do you see in
deliberately aligning powerful
instruction and assessment practices
to improve student learning?
- Which of these practices do you have
well-implemented at present?
- Record the specific questions you
would like to discuss with colleagues?



Research Support

Formative Assessment
Research

Powerful Research Conclusion

- Five reviews synthesizing 4000 research studies conducted over 40 years concluded:
- “When well-implemented, formative assessment can effectively double the speed of student learning.”

Dylan William, *Education Leadership*, December 2007/January 2008, p. 36.

Designing Quality Common Formative Assessments

What Should They Include?

10 Steps To Creating A Quality Common Formative Assessment !



Laying The Foundation: Steps 1-6

- **Step 1:** Select Important Instructional Topic
- **Step 2:** Identify Matching Priority Standards
- **Step 3:** “Unwrap” Selected Priority Standards
- **Step 4:** Create Graphic Organizer
- **Step 5:** Determine the Big Ideas
- **Step 6:** Write the Essential Questions

Common Formative Assessments: The Seminar;
The Leadership and Learning Center, Englewood, CO

Creating The Assessment: Steps 7-10

- **Step 7:** Write Selected-Response Items
- **Step 8:** Write Constructed-Response Items (extended or short)
- **Step 9:** Create Scoring Guide for Constructed-Response Items
- **Step 10:** Write Essential Question-Big Idea Directions

Common Formative Assessments: The Seminar;
The Leadership and Learning Center, Englewood, CO

Step 1: Choose an Important Topic

(for about a month of instruction)

- ❖ Reading Comprehension (Main Idea, Supporting Details, Inferences, and Generalizations)

☆ Other examples

Step 2: Identify

Matching Priority Standards

- 5.2.3 Recognize main ideas presented in texts and provide evidence that supports those ideas.
- 5.2.4 Draw inferences, conclusions, or generalizations about text and support them with textual evidence and prior knowledge.
- 5.2.5 Contrast facts, supported inferences, and opinions in text.

Step 3: “Unwrap” Priority Standards

- 5.2.3 RECOGNIZE main ideas presented in texts and PROVIDE evidence that supports those ideas.
- 5.2.4 DRAW inferences, conclusions, or generalizations about text and SUPPORT them with textual evidence and prior knowledge.
- 5.2.5 CONTRAST facts, supported inferences, and opinions in text.

Step 4 : Create a Graphic Organizer

“Unwrapped” Concepts From Targeted Power (Priority) Standards

- Main ideas
 - Supporting evidence
 - Inferences
 - Conclusions
 - Generalizations
 - Text evidence
 - Prior knowledge
 - Facts
 - Supported inferences
 - Opinions
- What Students Need to Know*

Step 4: Create a Graphic Organizer

“Unwrapped” Skills With Approximate Bloom’s Taxonomy Levels

- (2) RECOGNIZE (main idea)
- (2) PROVIDE (supporting evidence) *What Students Need to Be Able To Do*
- (4) CONTRAST (facts, supported inferences, opinions)
- (4) DRAW (inferences, conclusions, generalizations)
- (5) SUPPORT (inferences/conclusions w/ text evidence, prior knowledge)

Step 5: Determine Topical Big Ideas

1. Main ideas must be supported with evidence from text and supporting details.
2. We draw conclusions and make generalizations from what we read and from our own experiences.
3. Knowing the differences between facts, opinions, and inferences helps you make your own decisions about what you read.

Step 6: Write Essential Questions With Corresponding Big Ideas

1. *How do you know if your main idea is really the main idea?* (Main ideas must be supported with evidence from text and supporting details.)
2. *What are conclusions and generalizations? How do we arrive at them?* (We draw conclusions and make generalizations from what we read and from our own experiences.)

Step 6: Write Essential Questions With Corresponding Big Ideas

3. *Facts, opinions, inferences! What's the difference, and why should we know?* (Knowing the differences between facts, opinions, and inferences helps you make your own decisions about what you read.)



A Powerful Use of Essential Questions

"A Bucket of Trouble"



A Reading Passage with Sample Comprehension Item Set Questions

Step 7: Selected-Response: Multiple-Choice
Question is directly correlated to "unwrapped" concept, skill, and level of Bloom's Taxonomy. (Level 2) **RECOGNIZE** (main idea)

• **Student Directions:** Choose the *best* answer from the answer choices.

1. *What is the main idea of this tale?* (Level 2)
- Two frogs accidentally jumped into a pail of milk.
 - The little frog lived because he didn't give up.
 - Milk can be churned into butter with enough effort.

Step 7: Selected-Response: True / False
Question is directly correlated to "unwrapped" concept, skill, and level of Bloom's Taxonomy. •Level 4--**DRAW** (inferences, conclusions, generalizations)

➤ **Student Directions:** Write T or F in the space provided. (Level 4)

- _____ The little frog knew the milk would turn into butter if he kept paddling.
- _____ The little frog hoped that if he kept paddling, he would live.

Step 8: Extended-Response

Question is directly correlated to "unwrapped" concepts, skills, and levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.

- Level 4—**DRAW** (inferences, conclusions, generalizations)
- Level 5—**SUPPORT** (inferences, conclusions with text evidence, prior knowledge)

This tale *best* illustrates which one of the following generalizations: (Level 4)

- Danger can show up in the most ordinary places.
- Events sometimes take a surprising turn if you refuse to quit.
- Everyone fails some of the time.

Step 8: Write *Extended-Response* Item

- **Student Directions:** Write one or more paragraphs defending your answer choice for the multiple-choice question above. State your choice and three reasons to support it, using examples from the tale, "A Bucket of Trouble." Write a concluding sentence to summarize or support your choice. Your writing will be scored using the criteria listed on the Constructed-Response Scoring Guide. (Level 5)

STATE STANDARDS

**DATA TEAMS and
EFFECTIVE TEACHING
STRATEGIES**

**COMMON FORMATIVE
(POST-) ASSESSMENTS**

**DISTRICT
BENCHMARK
ASSESSMENTS**

STATE ASSESSMENTS

**COMMON FORMATIVE
(PRE-) ASSESSMENTS**

**“UNWRAPPING” THE
STANDARDS, BIG
IDEAS, ESSENTIAL
QUESTIONS**

POWER STANDARDS

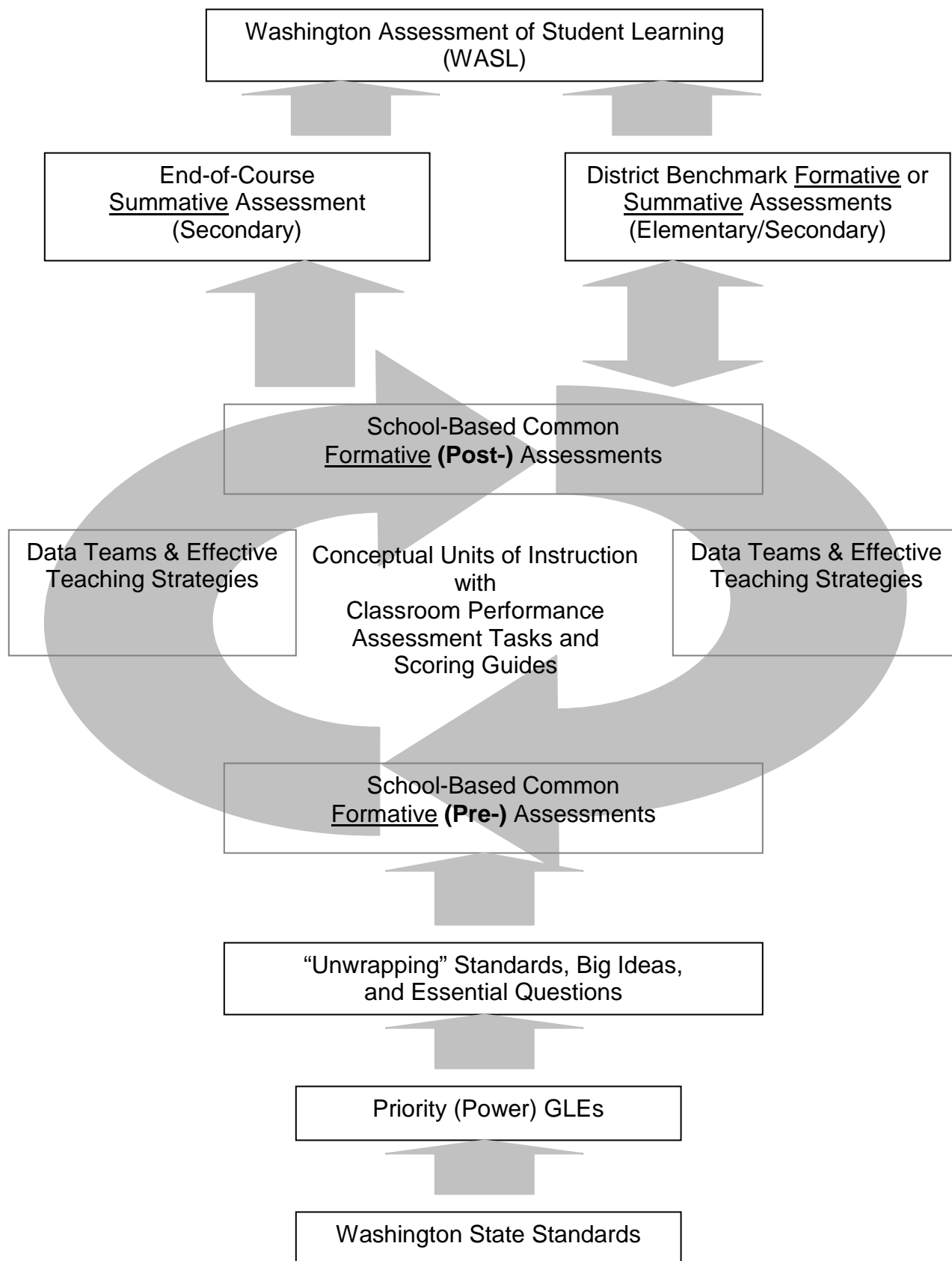
**CLASSROOM
PERFORMANCE
ASSESSMENTS
and SCORING GUIDES**

**END-OF-COURSE
ASSESSMENTS**

**DATA TEAMS and
EFFECTIVE TEACHING
STRATEGIES**

**DATA TEAMS and
EFFECTIVE TEACHING
STRATEGIES**

Washington Standards-Assessment Alignment Diagram



Common Formative Assessments: A Summary

Common Formative Assessments: A Summary

What Are Common Formative Assessments?

- Periodic or interim assessments collaboratively designed by grade-level or course teams of teachers.
 - Designed as matching *pre-* and *post-*assessments to ensure same-assessment to same-assessment comparison of student growth.
 - Similar in design and format to district and state assessments.
 - Items should represent essential (Priority) standards *only*.
 - A *blend* of item types, including selected-response (multiple choice, true/false, matching, fill-in) *and* constructed-response (short or extended).
 - Administered to all students in grade level or course several times during the semester, trimester, or entire school year.
 - Student results analyzed in Data Teams to guide instructional planning and delivery.
-

What Are the Guidelines for Designing Common Formative Assessments?

1. Identify and vertically align Priority Standards in content areas for each grade level and course, Pre-K–12.
2. Determine important topic to assess with common formative assessment; locate the Priority Standards that match that topic.
3. “Unwrap” the Priority Standards for that topic in order to pinpoint important concepts and skills students need to know and be able to do.
4. Determine Big Ideas from those “unwrapped” Priority Standards that represent the integrated understanding students need to gain.

Common Formative Assessments: A Summary

What Are the Guidelines for Designing Common Formative Assessments? (Continued)

5. Write Essential Questions—matched to the Big Ideas—to focus instruction and assessment.
 6. Collaboratively design common formative pre- and post-assessments—aligned to one another—that assess student understanding of the “unwrapped” Priority Standards’ concepts, skills, and Big Ideas.
 7. Include a *blend* of both selected-response and constructed-response items.
 8. Create the scoring instruments (answer key and scoring guides).
 9. Review items to determine if student assessment results will provide *evidence of proficiency* regarding Priority Standards in focus; modify items as needed.
 10. Administer and score common formative pre-assessments.
 11. Analyze results in Data Teams following five-step Data Team process.
 12. Use results to differentiate instruction for all students, including those needing intervention and those needing acceleration.
 13. Administer and score common formative post-assessments.
 14. Analyze results in Data Teams following five-step Data Team process.
 15. Critique assessment items for quality using specific guidelines for well-written items; revise assessment items as needed.
 16. Repeat entire process with next focus topic and corresponding Priority Standards.
-

Common Formative Assessments: A Summary

What Are the Benefits of Using Common Formative Assessments?

1. ***Regular and timely feedback*** regarding student attainment of most critical standards in order to better meet diverse learning needs of all students
2. ***Multiple-measure assessments*** that allow students to demonstrate their understanding in a variety of *formats*
3. ***Ongoing collaboration opportunities*** for grade-level, course, and department teachers
4. ***Consistent expectations*** within a grade level, course, and department regarding standards, instruction, and assessment priorities
5. ***Agreed-upon criteria for proficiency*** to be met within each individual classroom, grade level, school, and district
6. ***Deliberate alignment*** of classroom, school, district, and state assessments to better prepare students for success on state assessments
7. Results provide ***predictive value*** as to how students are likely to do on each succeeding assessment ***in time to make instructional modifications***

Source: L. Ainsworth and D. Viegut, *Common Formative Assessments: How to Connect Standards-Based Instruction and Assessment*, Corwin Press, 2006.

Grade 5 Reading Sample Assessment

Common Formative Assessment for Grade 5 Reading

Assessment Topic: *Reading Comprehension (Main Idea, Supporting Details, Inferences, and Generalizations)*

“Unwrapped” Grade 5 Reading Priority Standards

- 5.2.3** RECOGNIZE main ideas presented in texts and PROVIDE that supports those ideas.
- 5.2.4** DRAW inferences, conclusions, or generalizations about text and SUPPORT them with textual evidence and prior knowledge.
- 5.2.5** CONTRAST facts, supported inferences, and opinions in text.
-

“Unwrapped” Grade 5 Reading Comprehension Graphic Organizer

Priority Standards (listed by number): 5.2.3, 5.2.4, 5.2.5

Concepts: Need to Know about Reading Comprehension

- Main ideas
- Supporting evidence
- Inferences
- Conclusions
- Generalizations
 - Text evidence
 - Prior knowledge
- Facts
- Supported inferences
- Opinions

Grade 5 Reading Sample Assessment

Skills: Be *Able* to Do

(Note: Number in parentheses indicates approximate level of Bloom's Taxonomy of thinking skills.)

- (2) RECOGNIZE (main idea)
- (2) PROVIDE (supporting evidence)
- (4) CONTRAST (facts, supported inferences, opinions)
- (4) DRAW (inferences, conclusions, generalizations)
- (5) SUPPORT (inferences/conclusions, with text evidence, prior knowledge)

Big Ideas from "Unwrapped" Priority Standards

1. Main ideas must be supported with evidence from text and supporting details.
2. We draw conclusions and make generalizations from what we read and from our own experiences.
3. Knowing the differences between facts, opinions, and inferences helps you make your own decisions about what you read.

Essential Questions Matched to Big Ideas

1. *Are main ideas by themselves enough for us to believe them?*
(Main ideas must be supported with evidence from text and supporting details.)
2. *What are conclusions and generalizations? How do we arrive at them?*
(We draw conclusions and make generalizations from what we read and from our own experiences.)
3. *Facts, opinions, inferences! What's the difference, and why should we know?*
(Knowing the differences between facts, opinions, and inferences helps you make your own decisions about what you read.)

Grade 5 Reading Sample Assessment

Common Formative Assessment, Section 1 Sample *Selected-Response* Items (Design Team Would Add Others)

Multiple Choice: Comprehension Item Set (correctly written)

Student Directions: Read the following story and then answer the related questions.

* * *

A Bucket of Trouble

An East Indian Folktale Retold by Larry Ainsworth

Once upon a time a big frog and a little frog were hopping along together on a farm when they had the great misfortune of jumping straight into a half-filled, steel pail of fresh milk left outside the barn by the farmer's young son. The two frogs paddled for hours and hours, going round and round in the white liquid, hoping to get out somehow. But the sides of the pail were steep and slippery, and death seemed certain. When the big frog was exhausted, he lost courage. There seemed no hope of rescue.

"Why keep struggling against the inevitable?" he said, gasping for breath. "Keep on! Keep on!" urged the little frog in reply, who was still circling the pail. "Don't give up!"

So they went on this way for awhile longer. But the big frog at last decided that it was no use.

"Little brother, we may as well give up. I'm going to quit struggling." And with that, he sank beneath the waves of the milk to the bottom of the pail.

Now only the little frog was left. He thought to himself, "Well, to give up is to be dead. I will keep on swimming."

Two more hours passed, and the tiny legs of the determined little frog were almost paralyzed with exhaustion. It seemed as if he could not keep moving for another minute. But then he remembered his dead friend and made up his mind that he would keep on. Again and again he thought to himself: *I'll keep paddling until I die—if death is to come—but I will not cease trying. While there is life, there is hope!*

Filled with determination, the little frog kept on, circling around and around and around inside the pail, chopping the milk into white waves. After awhile, just as he felt completely numb and thought he was about to drown, he suddenly felt something solid underneath him. To his amazement, he saw that he was resting on a lump of butter which he had churned by his continuous paddling!

And so the successful little frog leaped out of the milk pail to freedom.

* * *

Grade 5 Reading Sample Assessment

The following questions have been designed to assess student understanding of all of these “unwrapped” concepts and skills:

- Level 2—RECOGNIZE (main idea)
- Level 2—PROVIDE (supporting evidence)
- Level 4—CONTRAST (facts, inferences, opinions)
- Level 4—DRAW (inferences, conclusions, generalizations)
- Level 5—SUPPORT (inferences, conclusions with text evidence, prior knowledge)

Selected-Response: Comprehension Item Set (correctly written)

Questions Correlated to Bloom’s Taxonomy of Thinking Skills (see parentheses)

Student Directions: Choose the best answer from the answer choices.

1. *What is the main idea of this tale?* (Level 2)
 - a. Two frogs accidentally jumped into a pail of milk.
 - b. The little frog lived because he didn’t give up.
 - c. Milk can be churned into butter with enough effort.
2. *Why did the big frog drown?* (Level 2)
 - a. He decided it was no use to keep trying.
 - b. His legs couldn’t move anymore.
 - c. He was too heavy to stay afloat.
3. True/False: Write T or F in the space provided. (Level 4)
_____ The little frog hoped that if he kept paddling, he would live.
4. True/False: Write T or F in the space provided. (Level 4)
_____ The little frog knew the milk would turn into butter if he kept paddling.
5. *This tale best illustrates which one of the following generalizations?* (Level 4)
 - a. Danger can show up in the most ordinary places.
 - b. Events sometimes take a surprising turn if you refuse to quit.
 - c. Everyone fails some of the time.

Sample Selected-Response Items (Continued)

6. Decide which line from the tale best supports this conclusion: *If you believe it, you can achieve it.* (Level 5)
- "Why keep struggling against the inevitable?"
 - "Well, to give up is to be dead."
 - "While there is life, there is hope."

Best Answers:

- b
- a
- T
- F
- b
- c

Meets Following Specific Guidelines: (see Correlation of Guidelines for others, pp. 173–174)

- Comprehension item set effective way to assess student reading comprehension.
- Only one choice is correct answer.
- Uses "best" answer instead of "correct" answer.
- Answer choices are reasonably equal in length.
- All distracters are plausible within the context of tale, *A Bucket of Trouble*.
- Items address "unwrapped" concepts and match rigor of "unwrapped" skills listed on graphic organizer.

Meets Following Specific Guidelines for True/False: (see p. 174 for others)

- True/false questions related to one reading passage
- Entirely true or entirely false
- Write so students must think; no easy answer
- Only one concept per question
- Equal number of true and false items
- Equal item length

Grade 5 Reading Sample Assessment

Common Formative Assessment, Section 2 Sample *Extended* Constructed-Response Items

This one item has been designed to assess student understanding of all of the following “unwrapped” concepts and skills:

- Level 4—DRAW (inferences, conclusions, generalizations)
- Level 5—SUPPORT (inferences, conclusions with text evidence, prior knowledge)

Student Directions: Write one or more paragraphs defending your answer choice for the following multiple-choice question. State your choice and three examples to support it from the folktale, *A Bucket of Trouble* (see p. 126). Write a concluding sentence that summarizes or supports your answer choice. Your writing will be scored using the criteria listed on the Constructed-Response Scoring Guide. (*Note:* Relative point values for criteria on scoring guide will be decided by teacher and students *prior* to assignment.)

*This tale **best** illustrates which one of the following generalizations?*

- a. Danger can show up in the most ordinary places.
- b. Events sometimes take a surprising turn if you refuse to quit.
- c. Everyone fails some of the time.

Constructed-Response Scoring Guide:

Exemplary

- ☐ All “Proficient” criteria *plus*:
- ☐ Includes reasons why selected choice is better than other two choices
- ☐ Includes real-life connection or experience in support of selected choice

Proficient

- ☐ States answer choice
- ☐ Supports answer choice with three examples from tale
- ☐ Writes one or more paragraphs
- ☐ Writes concluding sentence that summarizes or supports answer choice

Progressing

- ☐ Meets 2–3 of the “Proficient” criteria

Beginning

- ☐ Meets fewer than 2 of the “Proficient” criteria
- ☐ Task to be repeated after re-teaching

Teacher’s evaluation _____

Comments regarding student’s performance:

Grade 5 Reading Sample Assessment

Common Formative Assessment, Section 3 *Essential Questions with Big Idea Responses*

This portion of the common formative assessment requires students to demonstrate their *integrated* understanding of all the “unwrapped” concepts and skills in the targeted Priority Standards by expressing their understanding of the Big Ideas in their own words. Write your planned Essential Questions (and corresponding Big Idea responses for your own reference) in the space provided.

1. *Are main ideas by themselves enough for us to believe them?*
(Main ideas must be supported with evidence from text and supporting details.)
2. *What are conclusions and generalizations? How do we arrive at them?*
(We draw conclusions and make generalizations from what we read and from our own experiences.)
3. *Facts, opinions, inferences! What’s the difference?*
(Knowing the differences between facts, opinions, and inferences helps you make your own decisions about what you read.)

Teachers: Ask students to respond in writing to the three Essential Questions with their own Big Ideas. They should be able to explain their thinking using any of the “unwrapped” concept vocabulary (main idea, supporting details, inferences, conclusions, generalizations, etc.) that they can. Provide students with the accompanying Generic Scoring Guide to reference as they complete the assignment.

Generic Scoring Guide:

Exemplary

- ☐ All “Proficient” criteria *plus*:
- ☐ Makes connections to other areas of school or life
- ☐ Provides example(s) as part of explanation

Proficient

- ☐ States Big Ideas correctly in own words
- ☐ Provides supporting details for each one
- ☐ Includes vocabulary of “unwrapped” concepts in explanation

Progressing

- ☐ Meets 2 of the “Proficient” criteria

Beginning

- ☐ Meets fewer than 2 of the “Proficient” criteria
- ☐ Task to be repeated after re-teaching

Teacher’s evaluation _____

Comments regarding student’s performance:

Grade 8/9 Algebra I Sample Assessment

Common Formative Assessment for Grade 8/9 Algebra I

Assessment Topic: *Linear Equations and Inequalities*

“Unwrapped” Grade 8/9 Algebra I Mathematics Priority Standards

- 4.0** Students **SIMPLIFY** expressions prior to **SOLVE(ing)** linear equations and inequalities in one variable, such as $3(2x - 5) + 4(x - 2) = 12$.
- 5.0** Students **SOLVE** multi-step problems, including word problems, involving linear equations and linear inequalities in one variable and **PROVIDE** explanation (**JUSTIFY**) for each step.
- 6.0** Students **GRAPH** a linear equation and **COMPUTE** the x- and y-intercepts (e.g., graph $2x + 6y = 4$). They are also able to **SKETCH** the region defined by linear inequality (e.g., they sketch the region defined by $2x + 6y < 4$).

“Unwrapped” Grade 8/9 Algebra I Graphic Organizer

Priority Standards (listed by number): 4.0, 5.0, 6.0

Concepts: Need to Know about Equations and Inequalities

One Variable

- Linear equations
- Linear inequalities/related region
- x- and y-intercepts
- Multi-step problems/word problems

Grade 8/9 Algebra I Sample Assessment

Skills: Be *Able* to Do

(Note: Number in parentheses indicates approximate level of Bloom's Taxonomy of thinking skills.)

- (1) SIMPLIFY (expressions)
- (3) SOLVE (linear equations/inequalities; multi-step problems/word problems)
- (2 and 3) PROVIDE (step-by-step explanation)
- (2) GRAPH (linear equation)
- (3) COMPUTE (x- and y- intercepts)
- (2) SKETCH (region defined by inequality)

Big Ideas from “Unwrapped” Priority Standards

1. Linear equations can help explain real-life situations.
2. Algebraic solutions can be visualized on graphs.
3. There are precise and systematic ways to solve both inequalities and linear equations.

Essential Questions Matched to Big Ideas

1. *What are linear equations? How can we use them?*
(Linear equations can help explain real-life situations.)
2. *What information can one derive from the graph of an equation or inequality?*
(Algebraic solutions can be visualized on graphs.)
3. *How do we solve linear equations and inequalities?*
(There are precise and systematic ways to solve both inequalities and linear equations.)

Grade 8/9 Algebra I Sample Assessment

Common Formative Assessment, Section 1 Sample *Selected-Response* Items (Design Team Would Add Others)

The following two questions have been designed to assess student understanding of all of these “unwrapped” concepts and the related skill:

- Level 3—SOLVE (linear equations/inequalities)

Selected-Response: Multiple Choice (correctly written)

1. The total cost (c) in dollars of renting a motorcycle for n days is given by the equation $c = 120 + 60n$.

If the total cost was \$420, for how many days was the motorcycle rented? (Level 3)

- A. 2
- B. 4
- C. 5
- D. 6

Selected-Response: Multiple Choice (correctly written)

2. Solve the following problem on paper: $5y + 2(y - 3) = 92$. Compare your work to the following four steps. Identify the *incorrect* step. (Level 3)

- A. Step 1: $5y + 2y - 3 = 92$
- B. Step 2: $7y - 6 = 92$
- C. Step 3: $7y = 98$
- D. Step 4: $y = 14$

Answer Key: 1. C
2. A

Both Problems Meet Following Specific Guidelines: (see p. 173 for others)

- Question stem is self-contained and clear.
- Only one choice is correct answer.
- Answer choices are reasonably equal in length (for this problem).
- Distracters are plausible (includes most common mistake students make; Problem 2’s most common mistake is distributive property).
- Items address “unwrapped” concept (linear equations) and “unwrapped” skill (solve) listed on graphic organizer.
- Answer choices listed in numerical order.

Grade 8/9 Algebra I Sample Assessment

Common Formative Assessment, Section 2 Sample *Extended* Constructed-Response: Problem Solving

The following assessment item has been designed to assess student understanding of all of these “unwrapped” concepts and skills:

- Level 3—SOLVE (linear equations/inequalities; multi-step problems/word problems)
- Levels 2 and 3—PROVIDE (step-by-step explanation)

Student Directions: Your dad spends \$15 to park his car for a day. At the beginning of the month, he budgeted \$240 for parking. He now has \$90 left. How many days has he parked his car in the lot so far this month? Use the correct *algebraic equation* to solve this problem. Show all your steps. Explain in writing each of your steps to solve the equation. Your work will be evaluated according to the criteria listed on the Constructed-Response Scoring Guide. (*Note:* Relative point values for criteria on scoring guide will be decided by teacher and students *prior* to assignment.)

Answer: He has parked his car in the lot 10 days so far this month.

Constructed-Response Scoring Guide:

Exemplary

- ☐ All “Proficient” criteria *plus*:
- ☐ Verifies answer mathematically

Proficient

- ☐ Correct algebraic equation
- ☐ Shows all steps to solve equation
- ☐ Correct answer
- ☐ Written explanation describes steps followed to solve problem

Progressing

- ☐ Meets 2–3 of the “Proficient” criteria

Beginning

- ☐ Meets fewer than 2 of the “Proficient” criteria
- ☐ Task to be repeated after re-teaching

Teacher’s evaluation _____

Comments regarding student’s performance:

Grade 8/9 Algebra I Sample Assessment

Common Formative Assessment, Section 3 *Essential Questions with Big Ideas*

This portion of the common formative assessment requires students to demonstrate their *integrated* understanding of all the “unwrapped” concepts and skills in the targeted Priority Standards by expressing their understanding of the Big Ideas in their own words. Write your planned Essential Questions (and corresponding Big Idea responses for your own reference) in the space provided.

1. *What are linear equations? How can we use them?*
(Linear equations can help explain real-life situations.)
2. *What information can one derive from the graph of an equation or inequality?*
(Algebraic solutions can be visualized on graphs.)
3. *How do we solve linear equations and inequalities?*
(There are precise and systematic ways to solve both inequalities and linear equations.)

Teachers: Ask students to respond in writing to the three Essential Questions with their own Big Ideas. They should be able to explain their thinking using any of the “unwrapped” concept vocabulary (linear equations/inequalities, one-variable, x- and y- intercepts, etc.) that they can. Provide students with the accompanying Generic Scoring Guide to reference as they complete the assignment.

Generic Scoring Guide:

Exemplary

- ☐ All “Proficient” criteria *plus*:
- ☐ Makes connections to other areas of school or life
- ☐ Provides example(s) as part of explanation

Proficient

- ☐ States Big Ideas correctly in own words
- ☐ Provides supporting details for each one
- ☐ Includes vocabulary of “unwrapped” concepts in explanation

Progressing

- ☐ Meets 2 of the “Proficient” criteria

Beginning

- ☐ Meets fewer than 2 of the “Proficient” criteria
- ☐ Task to be repeated after re-teaching

Teacher’s evaluation _____

Comments regarding student’s performance:

consulting | professional development | publishing

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– Accountability –

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– Assessment –

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– Classroom (Instruction) –

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Beating the Odds. (PDF) John O. Simpson, January 2003; *American School Board Journal*

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Standards Make A Difference: The Influence of Standards on Classroom Assessment. (LNK) Dr. Douglas Reeves, January 2001; *NASSP Bulletin*

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The image shows a full-page worksheet template. At the top center, there is a title "Burning Questions, Challenges, and Success Stories..." in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Below the title are approximately 28 horizontal lines for writing, evenly spaced across the page. The entire worksheet is framed by a decorative border consisting of small, stylized stick figures. These figures are arranged in rows along the top and bottom edges, and in columns along the left and right edges. Each figure has its arms raised in a celebratory or enthusiastic gesture. The background of the page is white.